REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

By this Amendment, Claims 18-25 are added. Thus, Claims 7 and 12-25 are pending in this application. Claims 7 and 18 are the only independent claims. Support for Claims 18 and 20 can be found, for example, in lines 16-25 on page 21 of the specification. Claims 19 and 21-25 recite features in Claims 1 and 12-16, respectively. No new matter is added.

The Official Action rejects independent Claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,993,593 to Swartz et al. ("Swartz) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,044,628 to Katayama et al. ("Katayama"), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,007,078 to Aoki et al. ("Aoki"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 7 is directed to a process of producing a web-form laminated material used for packaging containers. The process includes, *inter alia*, sealing the trailing end of a web-form support layer to the leading end of a second web-form support layer by carrying out sealing of a conductive layer thereby forming a longer web-form support layer.

The Official Action acknowledges that the combination of Swartz and Katayama fails to disclose these claimed features, but takes the position that they are disclosed by Aoki. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Aoki discloses a method for supplying a plastic film strip B' from an extruder A to a winding device F and/or a bag making machine G as shown in Fig. 1 of the patent. In the method, the film strip B' is fed through a switching mechanism E to the winding device F via passage X where the film strip B' is wound around a winding drum 18 until the film strip B' has a predetermined thickness and breadth as

discussed in lines 55-61 of column 4 of Aoki (see also Fig. 1 of Aoki). In a first instance, the winding operation performed by the winding device F is stopped, and the film strip B' is cut by a heat cutting wire 43 as discussed in lines 58-68 of column 4. Thereafter, the cut film strip B' is fed via the switching mechanism E to the bag making machine G (see lines 4-7 of column 5 of Aoki).

However, if a coupling film strip B" is beforehand loaded on the bag making machine G, a different operation is performed after the film strip B' is wound around the winding device F. Here, Aoki discloses that before the film strip B' extending from the extruder A is cut, the rearward end of the film strip B" is passed through a second passage Y in the switching mechanism E as shown in Fig. 3 of Aoki, and is heat sealed to the film strip B' by the heat-sealer 15 (see lines 8-13 and 21-28 in column 5 of Aoki). After the rearward end of the coupling strip B" has been joined to the film strip B' under the heat-sealer 15, the portion of the strip B' extending to the winding device F is subsequently cut. The other portion of the film strip B', which is coupled with the strip B" and continuously supplied from extruder A, is fed to the bag making machine G through the second passage Y as discussed in lines 28-38 of column 5 of Aoki.

That is, Aoki simply discloses that the rearward end of a film strip B" is heat sealed to a film strip B' at a heat sealer 15 *while the film strip B' extends from an extruder A to a winding device F*. In other words, the rearward end of the film strip B" is heat sealed to the film strip B' *before* the film strip B' is cut. Therefore, the rearward end of the film strip B" is heat sealed to a *mid-portion* (i.e., a portion between the leading and trailing ends) of the film strip B'. The rearward end of the film strip B" is <u>not</u> heat sealed to the *leading end* of the film strip B' as defined in independent Claim 7.

Thus, the combination of Swartz, Katayama and Aoki does not disclose, and would not have rendered obvious, the combination of features recited in independent Claim 7, including sealing the trailing end of a web-form support layer to the leading end of a second web-form support layer by carrying out sealing of a conductive layer thereby forming a longer web-form support layer. Therefore, independent Claim 7 is patentable over the combination of Swartz, Katayama and Aoki for at least this reason.

Claims 12-17 are patentable over the applied references at least by virtue of their dependence from patentable independent Claim 7. Thus, a detailed discussion of the additional distinguishing features recited in these dependent claims is not set forth at this time. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Claims 18-25 are presented for consideration. New independent Claim 18 recites a process that includes joining a cut end face of a first web-form support layer to a cut end of a second web-form support layer, and sealing the cut end the first web-form support layer to the cut end of the second web-form support layer by carrying out sealing of the conductive layer. For the reasons discussed above, Aoki does not disclose joining a *cut end face* of a first web-form support layer to a *cut end* of a second web-form support layer. Swartz and Katayama also fail to disclose these features. Thus, independent Claim 7 is patentable over the combination of Swartz, Katayama and Aoki for at least this reason.

Claims 19-25 are patentable over the applied references at least by virtue of their dependence from patentable independent Claim 18. Thus, a detailed discussion of the additional distinguishing features recited in these dependent claims is not set forth at this time.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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